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CHALLENGE



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It's Not Just Bush, It's Capitalism As MILLIONS MARCH AGAINST WAR



While the Bush gang was selling duct tape and plastic wrap, millions of people around the world took to the streets in huge anti-war demonstrations on Feb. 15. This reflects the aspirations of millions of workers and youth to avoid war. It also points to a struggle within the U.S. ruling class over the timing and tactics for war as well as the growing isolation of the "world's only super power" from the other major imperialists. The struggle within the U.S. ruling class is adding fuel to the fires of growing fascism. The contradictions among the imperialists are setting the course for yet another world war. By building a mass international PLP among workers, soldiers and youth, across all borders, we can set the course for communist revolution.

The day before the demonstrations Secretary of State Colin Powell was ambushed at the UN Security Council. What was supposed to be a major step towards war turned into another Valentine's Day Massacre. Hans Blix reported that UN weapons inspectors were forcing concessions from Iraq, and that satellite pictures used by Powell in his Feb. 5 intelligence briefing of an Iraqi chemical decontamination truck were shot two weeks apart and could be "routine" movements.

The day after the demonstrations foreign ministers from 22 Arab nations meeting in Cairo called on all Arab

countries to "refrain from offering any kind of assistance or facilities for any military action that leads to the threat of Iraq's security, safety and territorial integrity." (New York Times, 2/17)

WAR NOW OR LATER?

Facing growing isolation at every turn, the Eastern Establishment, the main wing of the ruling class, may now prefer to wait until the Fall to launch their war, in order to carve out deals with the French and Russians. If these two principal rivals can be brought on board, the French and possibly the Russians might send troops to protect their share of the oil profit pie. But whether war starts next week, next month, or next Fall, any imperialist deals will end in blood.

According to Rachel Bronson, director of Middle East Studies at the main wing's Council on Foreign Relations, "The problem is the calendar....This rigid timetable is of Washington's own making....War rarely occurs on neat timelines, but the administration could get lucky. If not, a third option has always existed but has never been seized upon — to postpone an assault until next Fall.

"...America can afford to wait until next Fall for conditions to ripen. Iraq

Millions of people across the world protested on the weekend of Feb. 15-16 against a U.S. war in Iraq — from Cape Town to Moscow to Buenos Aires to Tel Aviv to San Francisco to Berlin to Melbourne to Damascus. Two million marched in London and nearly that number in Barcelona, 400,000 in New York City, and so on. This occurred simultaneously with an oil workers' strike in Nigeria against the super-exploitation by Chevron, Shell, and ExxonMobil; a mass rebellion erupting in Bolivia (even cops, usually the bosses' fascist repressive arm, struck and 20 were killed by army troops); a strike by tens of thousands of teachers in Guatemala for higher wages and more money for public education entered its second month; massive protests in the Dominican Republic opposed price increases in gas and other goods.

Masses of workers, youth and their allies are fed up with a system that only breeds endless wars and mass poverty. Millions in the anti-war movement are not won to the pacifist line of supporting a UN-led war in Iraq. Nor do European protesters necessarily believe the leadership of the "lesser imperialists" — France and Germany — is any better than the U.S. rulers. This situation is actually quite different from a similar stage during the anti-war protests of the Vietnam era.

There is real anger at, and hatred of, U.S. imperialism, personified by Bush. While there is a serious danger in portraying Bush as representing the entire U.S. ruling

class — that is, a misreading of the liberals — this worldwide reaction to Bush is nonetheless a new phenomenon. It caught the rulers by surprise. Until now, they seem to have worried mainly about the "Arab street" reaction. Now the "street" has expanded and they clearly have much more to worry about that they didn't anticipate.

These events also demonstrate how quickly things can change and how opportunities can open up. Revolutionaries should mainly be encouraged by Feb. 15; it underscores the struggle that needs to be waged for the political leadership of this now significant movement. This doesn't invalidate the point about the struggle against capitalism being a "long, hard" road, but something significant has happened here. It would be a bad mistake to take a hands-off approach.

Now, if Washington does launch this war — tomorrow, in March, in the Fall or whenever — they must face not only the problems they're very likely to encounter in the Gulf and the Middle East, but also the potential for anti-U.S. rebellions globally, including the non-Arab, non-Muslim world. This significantly expands their liabilities. However, if they find themselves unable to launch their war because of these new circumstances, they will suffer another kind of setback, which will, over the not-so-long run, make them more desperate and render war even more important to them. ☺

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PLP At LA March: Not Just Bush, It's the Whole System

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 15 — An estimated 40,000 people marched here today against the coming invasion of Iraq, moving through Hollywood and ending at an army recruiting center. Cheers and applause greeted PLP'ers' denunciation of the war as an imperialist bloodbath for control of oil and our attack on the Democrats as being equally responsible for the slaughter. Speakers called for communist revolution to destroy capitalist wars, crisis and oppression worldwide.

Several people in various contingents said the best thing about the march was PLP's presence and that so many people are against the war and winnable to the understanding that the capitalist system, not just Bush, is the cause of wars for profit.

One college student said he was really impressed with "PLP's revolutionary message." At a peace coalition meeting at his university he heard a PL member emphasize the importance of reaching out to

workers and soldiers and organizing militant actions on campus. Now, at this march, frustrated by what he described as "pacifism" and a "lack of diversity," he appreciated more PL's "political stance" and wanted to stay in touch with the Party.

Another demonstrator said she was "tired of all the empty slogans" at these protests and was interested in learning more about PLP. There were many more such conversations throughout the march.

A group of enthusiastic youth who handed out PLP flyers containing many of the above ideas plan to take this message to workers and youth who did not march. Without this struggle, many people will be misled to think that the Democrats represent a real alternative and not just a different tactic (see editorial). This would leave people defenseless as fascism deepens.

The liberal rulers are openly building and using these marches to organize for "patriotic" dissent and war on their terms.

As has increasingly become the norm, Hollywood celebrities like Martin Sheen led the march and politicians like Maxine Waters chanted, "Give peace a chance!" That and "Impeach Bush," were among the main march slogans. One veteran marcher, seeing a big "impeach Bush" banner remarked, "What a big banner for such a little idea."

The rivalry between the U.S. and other imperialist powers over control of Iraqi oil is clearly sharpening. Last week European Union leaders openly defied the U.S., threatening the existence of the Atlantic alliance. But it's a dangerous illusion to think there are any "good" capitalists or imperialists. Neither the U.S. nor the French or Germans represent any hope for the world's workers.

We can't stop the bosses from starting their murderous wars. But we can organize the PLP. Communist participation at



anti-war events combined with building PLP in the shops and schools must become the passion of more and more workers and students who, on the eve of imperialist war, will be seeking an alternative to this horrid system. Let's make sure the alternative becomes an international revolutionary communist movement. ☸

BILLIONS FOR WAR, UNEMPLOYMENT FOR 20 MILLION

"The worst hiring slump in almost 20 years" (New York Times, 2/6) has sent unemployment through the roof, approaching 20 million. Over two million jobs have been lost since the beginning of the recession in March 2001. During the 11-month "recovery," mass layoffs are the rule. According to the Times, manufacturers of durable goods have cut one of every nine jobs; airlines, brokerage firms, and the clothing/textile industry laid off one of every ten. Many states are slashing jobs to close budget deficits. The number of help wanted ads in newspapers is the lowest in 40 years. Almost two million workers have been unemployed for at least six months, triple the figure just two years ago.

"Waiting for war...weighs down the economy." (NYT, 1/26) Big Business holds back on investing in new factories; small businesses hesitate to hire more workers. And "the likelihood of war with Iraq...[affects] everything from oil prices and air travel to consumer confidence and international financial markets" (NYT, 1/26), all of which increases joblessness.

THE PHONY FIGURES

The government's "official" unemployment rate rose from 3.9% to 6% in the last two years. But that is less than HALF the story. Well hidden in the government reports is something called the U-6 unemployment rate. This includes categories of joblessness not counted in the "official" 6% figure: "discouraged" workers who've given up looking for non-existent jobs; and those who want full-time jobs but must settle for part-time. (The government says

if you work one hour a month you're "employed!") U-6 says, "The unemployment rate jumped to 11% in January, from 9.6% the month before." (NY Post, 2/11)

Eleven percent of a 135-million workforce amounts to 15 million unemployed. Add two million in prison and the millions on welfare who would work if there were decent jobs and sufficient day-care. But that's still not the whole story.

Comparing the 2000 Census figures to the 1990 totals, the Labor Dept. "discovered" that they've been undercounting the number of Latino workers in the workforce, who have an "empirically verifiable unemployment rate that is higher than...whites....The government expects this change...to worsen the unemployment data." (NY Post, 2/11) Underestimating Latino jobless figures for at least ten years means that total unemployment right now may well exceed 20 million.

What does it mean when the economists say "the economy as a whole is in decent shape" and growing while joblessness deepens? It means "businesses are finding more ways to get more production out of each current employee....The kind of growth that previously gave...rising employment...now gives us rising unemployment." (New York Times 1/26) Speed-up works!

The U.S. ruling class's drive for maximum profits inevitably comes into conflict with rival capitalists, also governed by the drive for maximum profits, and leads to war. The only answer to these insoluble contradictions is destroying the profit system with communist revolution. ☸

Capitalist Crisis Running Amok

The economic crisis of U.S. capitalism is reaching gargantuan levels, and will be intensified by the Bush administration's budget proposals. When the budget went on sale in government bookstores, the London Financial Times (2/4) editorialized, "Too bad they do not have a fiction department to put it in."

U.S. imperialism hopes to solve their economic crisis the old fashioned capitalist way: war abroad and fascism at home. They hope to seize Iraq's oil fields to control the Middle East (world's largest energy source) and dominate the world. At the same time they are increasing repression of U.S. workers through the USA Patriot Act, dragnet arrests of thousands of immigrants, vast cuts in vital services, busting strikes and intensified racism against black and Latin workers.

The Bush budget uses Hitler's Big Lie technique. It depicts a tax cut for the rich as a plan to "help the unemployed." It calls the sabotage of Medicare an "expansion and improvement of the healthcare system." The \$307 billion deficit for 2004 was projected as a \$262 billion surplus two years ago. That's a \$500 billion lie! And it doesn't include a possible \$200 billion debt from an invasion of Iraq.

The Financial Times says that even the 5-year cumulative \$1.05 TRILLION deficit for 2004-2008 was achieved through "sleight of hand." Without the surpluses stolen from Social Security, the 5-year deficit more than doubles, to \$2.1 TRILLION.

A deficit means the government is spending more than it is taking in. They "balance the books" by stealing the Social Security surplus, borrowing (which nets big interest payments to the banks and foreign investors) and slashing money to the states for social services. Then the states must cut these services and raise taxes to make up their own deficits. So the federal tax cuts for the rich are paid for by increased taxes on all workers.

But this is not strictly a "Bush operation." The Democrats voted for Bush's tax cut for the wealthy, and for the last 20 years has

approved the using of trillions of the Social Security surpluses for other purposes such as increasing the war budget. And every Democratic presidential candidate supports a war on Iraq, as they did the war on Afghanistan.

Financing the U.S. foreign debt of \$2.8 trillion requires a flow of foreign capital into the U.S. of \$2 billion a day. But with projected trillion-dollar deficits and the continuing recession/depression, at some point foreign financing of these debts could become too risky and investors might begin to pull their money out, leading to an even deeper crisis.

There are divisions among the rulers about how to handle this crisis. Full-page ads have appeared in leading newspapers sponsored by bankers and Democratic and Republican former government officials, criticizing the Bush policies. How these differences work themselves out remains to be seen. But all sections of the ruling class agree that the working class must pay for the bosses' crisis.

There are nearly 20 million unemployed (see article this page). Two million U.S. jobs have disappeared in the last two years. Over 43 million live without health insurance. The racist double burden on black and Latin workers, the squeezing of Medicare, the raising of the retirement age for Social Security, the threat to the pensions of 44 million retirees — these are all effects of the crisis of a profit system controlled by ALL bosses and defended by BOTH their parties.

And the workers will pay in blood with the deaths of working-class soldiers and millions of innocent civilians in wars for oil. Such a system cannot be reformed. The only solution is communist revolution to eliminate profits and bosses and guarantee that those who produce all value will collectively reap the fruits of their labors. ☸



Venezuela: Fascist Lockout Failing; Workers Power Is Way To Go



After 62 days of a bosses' lockout (erroneously labeled a strike by their media), the old Venezuelan ruling class failed completely to oust President Chavez. The right-wing bosses and their allies in the Union Federation leadership, the church hierarchy, the high-paid technicians in the state-owned oil company and Cuban exiles in Miami, as well as some in the Bush administration, are now in disarray. This followed last April's failure when a one-day coup

briefly installed Pedro Carmona, head of the Chamber of Commerce, as President. Then in a few hours, the putschists tried to impose a Pinochet-style government, scaring away even many of its own supporters. Although U.S. bosses at first supported the coup, they changed their minds when they realized it wouldn't help their plans to whack Iraq under the cover of "bringing democracy to the Middle East." When tens of thousands of poor workers came out to oppose the coup, it unraveled and the military brought back Chavez. The putschists failed again in the fall, and then tried a third time with this 62-day lockout. But again, the support of most of the military and of poor and industrial workers who hate the old racist rulers, combined with the vacillations of U.S. imperialism,

doomed this attempt. Venezuela's working class has played a key role in the struggle. Although Chavez, under pressure from the military high command, treated the lockout with kid gloves, belying the "dictator" label, support for the putschists remained mainly in the better-off neighborhoods of Caracas and a few other cities. Industrial workers sabotaged the lockout, forcing big plants in the South to remain open. In the industrial city of Valencia, dissident unionists kept a vigilant 24-7 watch to stop the bosses from joining the lockout. In the oil refinery and petrochemical plants of Puerto La Cruz, 95% of the workers kept production going at a 60-70% level, despite most of the technicians and engineers joining the lockout. These workers are realizing that they're key to running everything: "We shattered the myth that only a well-prepared elite can run the company.... We helped the Chavez government from falling." (Punto de Vista

monthly magazine, Jan. 2003) Interestingly enough, Chavez had attacked many of these militant workers in the past because they opposed the partial privatization of Fenitro, a fertilizer company. But the militancy of these workers and their hatred of the old rulers conflicts with an illusion that they can pressure Chavez to serve their interests, that nationalist and populist leaders like Chavez will liberate workers and their allies from the yoke of capitalism and imperialism. Nothing could be further from the truth. Chavez, despite his rhetoric, has accepted foreign investment in state-owned enterprises (Exxon and other big oil companies). He's done very little to ease the poverty of most workers who support him. Workers must learn they will achieve liberation only by ending a system based on production for the profits of a few and by fighting for one where production serves the needs of all workers: communism.

BILLIONS FOR WAR, BANKRUPTCY FOR PENSIONS

The crisis of capitalism is turning the "American Dream" into a nightmare for 44 million holding private pensions. A combination of bankruptcies, declining stock prices and lower interest rates is threatening a "disastrous Savings-&-Loan-style collapse" (New York Times, 1/25) in the federal agency that insures pensions for tens of millions, the second largest source of income for retirees after Social Security. The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) had its entire \$8 billion surplus devoured in one year by bankruptcies at LTV Steel, USAirways, Bethlehem Steel, United Airlines, K-Mart and others. Underfunding of these pension plans — the difference between what companies have promised to pay in pensions and the funds

they've set aside to do so — has skyrocketed to \$300 billion. The problem has a Catch-22 "solution": to prop up PBGC's funding, companies could be asked to increase their payments to the agency; but this could impel some companies to stop offering pensions altogether. For reserves to rise without increased payments, either a rising stock market or rising interest rates are required. Usually, when one goes up the other goes down. But for the first time since 1939-1941, a three-year bear market has coincided with falling interest rates. The only thing that capitalism can guarantee is continuous and intensifying exploitation and insecurity for the working class. That's reason enough to "retire" the whole damn profit system.☸

Workers' Solidarity Is An International Language

Recently I started working in a new garment factory and began making new friends. One was a worker just over from China who didn't speak English — much less Spanish. The bosses were always shouting at him. One day, a boss called him "an idiot who didn't understand anything." I stood up from my machine and shouted at the boss, "That's no way to treat a worker! Because he can't speak English, he can't stick up for himself, and because he doesn't understand you, you insult him more. Leave him alone." Then I made signs to the worker showing him with my fist and the anger on my face, gritting my teeth, that he had to defend himself; that he had to shout back. All this surprised everybody, especially because he and I come from different ethnic backgrounds. We've become friends, and although

we can't communicate much, we do laugh a lot and visit each other in our homes and at work. This experience demonstrates that no matter where we come from or what language we speak, all the world's workers have one common language: workers fighting the bosses' abuses and the exploitation of our entire class. We've shared the understanding not to wait for "divine justice," but instead to fight back; that we must break with our cultural and racial prejudices by recognizing that we are class brothers and sisters; and that only by uniting can we smash capitalism and its exploitative wage system. The road to communist revolution starts with this kind of unity. Let's start building it today in our workplaces. *INTERNATIONALIST COMRADE*

WORKERS AND YOUTH CELEBRATE CHALLENGE

The highlight of our CHALLENGE dinner, attended by 45 steelworkers, hospital workers, students and youth, was the following talk given by a new young comrade. The dinner shows we're modestly taking advantage of the opportunities created by the bosses' rush to fascism and war. "On January 17, many comrades and myself endured a night-long bus ride in order to take our struggle against capitalist war for oil to the door of the racist bosses. Estimates of the rally range from 100,000 to 500,000. Regardless of the total number, PLP had an enormous presence among the liberal cries for peace. "Red flags waved proudly. Chants for communist revolution and workers' solidarity throughout the world were heard loud and clear."

will not allow the murder of workers all over the world to continue. The bosses claim they want to liberate the people of Iraq, but we all know that the only liberation they're concerned with is "liberating" Iraqi oil. "People throughout the world realize this. However, they fail to understand that the system they hold so dear is the root of the problem. The bosses want oil for profits. The profit system is the enemy of the international working class. Iraq is the problem we face at the moment. But the more the bosses fight among themselves, there will be more wars and more workers will suffer. "But there is hope. There is a massive communist revolution building right under the bosses' feet. They have no idea how hard we are working and mobilizing to destroy their racist, fascist, oppressive system and educate the masses in the truth of Marxism. The plan has been laid before us. We all know our part. Organize in the community; speak to your friends and family about the realities of capitalism and the glorious liberating revolution that is ahead of us all. "Together we can make a marvelous world for the proletariat and bring the bosses to their knees. Join the Party and fight for communist revolution. A better world is possible. We can liberate ourselves from the oppression of the bourgeoisie."☸

WORKERS OF THE WORLD WRITE!

Unite With GI's

My collective noticed that in a few otherwise generally good articles in several recent CHALLENGES, there seemed to be a tendency by some who are against the coming war to cast members of the armed forces as the enemy of workers. One letter mentioned students who said they were too "smart" to join the armed forces. This portrayal is inaccurate and doesn't help our efforts to reach out to those who find themselves in the armed forces. Many join up mainly looking for a way to pay for school or get a job, not to help Exxon Mobil or U.S. rulers.

In recent issues, it's been clear we want to unite with the working class, on the job and in the barracks. That makes us confident we're on the right road. As contradictions sharpen, many of the hundreds of thousands of working-class youth most affected by war will be open to the truth about it. We can learn from history and build a powerful movement that ultimately will defeat imperialism.

Youth Says 'Let Our Voices Be Heard'

I look at problems in my high school and see how money rules the world. For example, my science teacher only gives out grades of 65-75, no matter what you actually earned. He doesn't explain the work on the board and only a few students pass the regents. Yet, this teacher is still here. My school has only black and Latino students and it is situated in a black neighborhood. I know if my school's population and location were different, that teacher would be gone.

Capitalism creates this problem. It will always be the rich over the poor, the "superior" over the "inferior" and the powerful over the powerless. Everybody should have a chance at equal opportunities no matter what ethnicity, nationality, economic status or color.

One of my peers started a petition, but hardly anybody signed it. They were afraid because they thought something would be done to the teacher. My peers were afraid of taking action and seeing the results.

For so long youths have been accustomed to sitting passively and doing nothing about things. Capitalist society considers change "wrong." So many youths don't realize they can make a change. This is a call for all youth to stand up! Let your voice be heard! Next time you know you deserve a B+ rather than a B, confront your teacher. We youths need to empower ourselves with knowledge to survive in this capitalist world. We have a voice!

Brooklyn H.S. Student

Imperialists Fear Spirit of Unity

"What do we want? Peace! When do we want it? Now!"

The crowd shouted, growing stronger and stronger. With their fists high, posters straight in the air and the look of change on their faces. I knew I would never forget this day, January 18, 2003.



Peace seems like a fantasy with these capitalist bosses raging our country into war. On every station you see "Mr. President" trying to convince us everything will be all right, while thousands of innocent children are getting bombed every day and another youth is shot in the ghetto.

As I marched, I met people from all over the U.S. They wore their hearts on their faces. They all came to Washington for one fight, to stop the imperialist power from striking again. There was no "I" that day, only "We." That's the way we can put an end to this oil war. We the people can't sit around anymore, but must come together.

"It's your turn," my teacher said. Nervousness quickly ran through me. The question was, "Why was I attending this rally?" I quickly answered, "to make a change. I was tired of watching television and wanted to do something." "What kind of change?" I asked myself, and couldn't find an answer, not knowing that by the end of the day I would find one.

As a youth growing up in a capitalist society, you feel you have no power. It all lies in the hands of the "established," the rich. You feel your voice is silent to many ears. Capitalism creates this barrier, the idea that the "superior" one will always win. But we the people can't let this notion go on, can't let things just go by. If that continues, we'll always feel "inferior."

The need to make money — such as the prison business — breaks up families. Prisoners work for as little as 30 cents an hour. Anger grows in my blood when school budgets are cut, but yet they have the money to build more prisons. Issues like these show me that capitalism is not the way.

My nickname during the march was "energizer bunny." I kept shouting, talking and singing. I could not stop because the spirit there just moved me, the spirit of seeing strangers talking to one another like they were old friends, of seeing people not caring if you were black or white, young or old, short or tall. Seeing people come together was very uplifting.

Imperialist powers fear this spirit. They're afraid of people uniting and breaking the barriers they set up. It was

the spirit of change that held everybody together that day. Imperialists spend millions to try to control this spirit — not knowing it is inside everybody and in due time will be released.

Brooklyn H.S. Student

Gardener Has Red Thumb

I'm a gardener and work mostly for rich people. Recently I arrived at one of these mansions and was surprised to see some posters against the war. When I asked my boss what it meant, she replied, "I'm against Bush's war and I participated in the last march in downtown LA."

I also had been in that march, but my objective was to attack the whole capitalist system, not just Bush. While I didn't tell this to my boss, it felt weird to think my boss and I had been together fighting against the war. Later I realized it appeared we were united on that march, but in reality we were each there for our own interests.

RED GARDENER

Terror at Home: Unemployment, Low Wages

I work in a garment factory. At lunchtime we have very heated discussions about the war. Most of these workers hate the war, but the majority only blame Bush.

Recently one worker said the war won't affect him — it's far away and bombs wouldn't fall here. Another worker asked him, "Why do you think there isn't much work, and we're only earning \$150 a week?" Then she explained how the economy and war go hand in hand. Another worker remarked that the attacks on immigrant workers were part of this campaign for an oil war in Iraq.

Although it may be difficult to move workers into political activities, there's a big opportunity to discuss politics and advance their understanding of how the capitalist system works. This could lead to a united fight against the bosses.

GARMENT WORKER

Capitalism Strikes Out

My wife and I went to the Feb. 15 antiwar march in New York City. It was her first. I'm sure she wasn't the only first-time participant against these murderous U.S. imperialist policies. She gained insight into the role of the police, with their horses, helmets and clubs. Previously she mostly thought of cops as helpers of anyone in trouble. Now she may very well come to May Day, where the reasons for the brutal U.S. war drive would be better clarified.

A Reader

Peace Marches Mean We Got To Fight Back

A spirited PLP contingent joined the Chicago coalition on the Feb. 15 day of international protest. The march was more like the Mardi Gras of anti-war protests, with marching bands dressed as skeletons in Uncle Sam top hats playing, "When The Saints Go Marching In." The PLP group, in large part students from various campuses, gave speeches, chanted and distributed literature.

One friend from Malcolm X Community College, protesting for the first time ever, said that while "ideas are swirling around in my head, communism seems like the best way to go." This comrade distributed CHALLENGE on the train ride home and discussed our ideas with his mother. His participation and enthusiasm has inspired me, and I hope others here at school.

At the march I heard an interesting comment from one of the four pro-war knuckleheads, which really reinforced the idea that these anti-war protests are run by the liberal Democrats. He said, "Why are you protesting this war against Iraq and didn't against the war in Kosovo? What's the difference between Milosevic and Saddam?" I think this guy has a point. These protests don't condemn the Clinton administration or connect these Democrats to U.S. imperialism. Interestingly enough, besides PLP's analysis and actions, his comments were more profound than any of the peace groups.

Despite the low politics and high antics of the march, we were very well received. People listened to our speeches and asked for CHALLENGE. We distributed hundreds of flyers. Most importantly we brought our friends. Later that evening, students from various areas, meeting for the first time hung out and further discussed our ideas. This was especially good for two students from my school. One had argued about the ineffectiveness of peace marches before ever going to one, which of course he has a point. He experienced not only their weaknesses, but was also able to differentiate our politics and strategy from the other so-called left organizations. While the antiwar protests are not the center of our work, they are definitely organizing tools, not only for the workers there, but for those that we bring. "Peace Marches Mean We Got To Fight Back!"

Malcolm Red

U.S. 'Victory' in Afghanistan Still A Mirage

U.S. War Secy. Rumsfeld boasts that the U.S. military can make war on many fronts. Maybe, but meanwhile its "victory" in Afghanistan is increasingly becoming a mirage. Ahmed Rashid, author of a book on the Taliban, calls it "The Other Front" (Wall Street Journal, 2/11). "For the last few weeks, American B-1 heavy bombers and helicopter gunships have been fighting the largest force of Afghan rebels to have surfaced in nearly a year in southern Afghanistan." (WSJ)

'U.S. Special Forces near the Pakistani border are being rocketed daily. Mines and rockets have exploded near U.S. army headquarters outside Kabul.'

U.S. Special Forces near the Pakistani border are being rocketed daily. Mines and rockets have exploded near U.S. army headquarters outside Kabul. In the city itself, U.S. and other foreign troops have been attacked constantly. Hundreds of anti-U.S. militants are mobilizing on the Pakistani border for a Spring offensive to coincide with a U.S. invasion of Iraq.

Who's behind these attacks? Bin Laden? Saddam Hussein? No, it's being coordinated by a U.S. "ally" — the Pakistani ISI (Intelligence Services)! This same ISI financed and coordinated the forces led by bin Laden fighting the Soviet army occupying Afghanistan in the 1980s, serving the CIA and Saudi Arabia. The current anti-U.S. forces "are receiving logistical and financial support from former or current members of Pakistan's InterService Intelligence agency." (London Financial Times, Feb.

8-9) Many in Pakistani ruling circles now believe their country is the "next target in the U.S. line of fire." (FT) Pakistan sent North Korea uranium-enriched technology in exchange for ballistic missile assistance. Bush ambassador Nancy Powell caused an uproar in Pakistan when she implied it continues to be a "platform for the spread of global terrorism." (FT)

What's turned Pakistan from a "close ally" of the U.S., "against terror" to close to something approaching Bush's "axis of evil"?

The Pakistani ruling class, like all bosses worldwide, is defending its own interests. While still claiming it's hunt-

ing elements of Al Qaeda hiding in Pakistan, it's simultaneously allowing ethnic Pashtun fundamentalists to attack the U.S. on the border. "Pakistan is extremely apprehensive of the increasing influence in Afghanistan of India and Russia, who are arming several non-Pashtun warlord armies as well as giving support to Afghanistan's ethnic Tajik defense minister, Mohammed Fahim, who has the largest factional army in Afghanistan and is regarded as an ally by the U.S." (WSJ)

The U.S. is asking Russia to cut off \$100 million worth of weapons being supplied to Fahim's personal army, a policy negating U.S. efforts to build a multi-ethnic national Afghan army loyal to the central government.

Since Pakistan sees the U.S., Russia, Iran and India — its worst enemy — arming different Afghan groups, it's decided to do the same, arming the most extreme fundamentalist Pashtun groups on both sides of the border. Meanwhile, pro Taliaban-Al Qaeda anti-U.S. fundamentalist parties in Pakistan are gaining strength.



U.S. "war on terror" has brought this kind of mess to Southeast Asia. It will multiply itself in Iraq once Desert Storm 2 begins. The rulers of Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Russia, France and Germany, and whatever remains of the Saddam Hussein's forces, will do the same to ensure U.S. occupation won't be as smooth as Bush plans.

For workers, soldiers and others, imperialist and local capitalist rivalries, along with fundamentalism, is a recipe for endless wars. It's time to rebuild the communist movement, with its long history of organizing workers and others — from Iraq to Afghanistan — while learning from its past errors. The only way out of this imperialist hell is to fight for a society without any bosses: communism.✴

Terrorizing Civilians A 'Long U.S. Tradition'

U.S. bosses want Iraqis and others worldwide to believe the U.S. military will be "the liberator and protector of an oppressed Iraq, not an enemy occupying force." (New York Times, 2/11) On Feb. 10, Bush denied U.S. forces will target civilians, saying they will follow a "long U.S. tradition" of respecting civilian lives.

But history and facts are stubborn. A long-held U.S. imperialist strategy is to target civilians directly, to terrorize whole populations into submission. The most recent example was the bombing of civilian targets — including hospitals, power and water plants, etc. — during the 1999 U.S.-led air massacre of the former Yugoslavia. Tens of thousands of civilians were killed during these air raids, while almost the entire Yugoslavian army in Kosovo escaped intact.

Bush, Sr. did the same in December,

1989, when he went after his "compadre," Manuel Noriega. (Bush Sr. was the godfather of one of Noriega's children!). Over 5,000 civilians were slain when U.S. planes and ground forces attacked Panama City's Chorrillo, a poor working-class neighborhood. They were buried in mass graves in an attempt to hide this war crime.

The U.S.-led UN sanctions against Iraq following Desert Storm I have caused hundreds of thousands of civilian casualties, including a half million children who have died due to lack of food and health care. Untold thousands of civilians are also dying because of the after-effects of U.S. shells and bombs containing depleted uranium (a "tactical" nuclear weapon) during Desert Storm 1 and will occur in Afghanistan as well.

According to Ret. Colonel David H.



During the 1980's the U.S. was buddy-buddy with Saddam and Iraq. The U.S. gave military aid to Iraq in its war against neighboring Iran. Here, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, then National Security Advisor for Ronald Reagan shakes hands with Hussein.

Hackworth, more than 161,000 U.S. Desert Storm I vets have been disabled, and almost 10,000 have died, from Gulf War illnesses which the U.S. government repeatedly claimed "were only in their heads." (Hackworth.com, 1/23).

AGENT ORANGE: A WEAPON OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Much has been said about the U.S. GI's deformed and killed from exposure

to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. But little is reported about its Vietnamese civilian victims, from a war that ended three decades ago. "The Pediatrics Hall of Tu Du hospital in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) seems like a chamber of horrors. Dozens of children, many under 12...show some physical deformation. Vo is one of them, formed with his feet curved inwards. Similar scenes can be seen in pediatric wings all over the country." (EL MUNDO, Madrid, 2/9).

During the Vietnam War, the Pentagon waged chemical warfare against the Vietnamese people, using Agent Orange, a herbicide mixed with kerosene and diesel to burn the vegetations where Vietcong guerrillas were hiding. This Agent Orange contained TCDD, even today the most powerful poison known. It was spread from Hercules C-123 planes, helicopters, land vehicles, navy boats and even hoses handled by infantry soldiers. Agent Orange not only killed vegetation but also spread to rivers, grassland used by cattle and other animals. Even worse, it poisoned the maternal milk of pregnant women. Doctor Hoang Dinh said the dioxin in Agent Orange harms human DNA, affecting chromosomes for three generations.✴

U.K./U.S./Nazi Imperialists Learned from Each Other

Singling out Saddam Hussein for using poison gas against Kurdish civilians during the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s exposes the hypocrisy of the imperialists. (Both Iran and Iraq used poison gas against each other, with chemicals supplied by U.S., Germany and other Western countries). But in fact, the first use of poison (mustard) gas against civilians was ordered by Winston Churchill in 1915 against what he called "the uncivilized Arab tribes" of Mesopotamia (Iraq) opposed to British imperialism. The Nazis learned from the British, attacking civilians during World War II, as well as partisan movements organized by communists and others in Nazi-occupied Eastern and Western Europe, again to terrorize entire populations into submission. Many Nazi officers who fought Soviet guerrillas during WWII were exempted from the Nuremberg War Crimes trial by U.S. and U.K. bosses.

One Nazi general lectured his U.S. captors on how to best fight guerrillas, using methods acquired while fighting what he called a "war against bandits." He said that if the Nazis had had nuclear weapons, they would have used them to oust the victorious Soviet guerrillas in the Pripjet swamps.

U.S. President Truman learned that lesson well, nuking Hiroshima and Nagasaki, massacring 250,000 civilians on the pretext of forcing Japan's surrender. (Japan was already defeated.) Actually U.S. rulers used the A-Bomb to threaten the Soviet Union, whose Red Army had defeated the Nazis virtually by itself, as well as a good part of the Japanese army in Manchuria.

After WWII, the U.S. and British imperialists used the Nazis themselves and their techniques on many fronts: from developing the U.S. missile program to fighting the anti-imperialist movements worldwide, including in Vietnam.

When it comes to using weapons of mass destruction and murdering civilians, the U.S. bosses and their British allies are world champs.